

APPROVED
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
15 November 2001

Projects Reviewed

Elevated Transportation Company
CityDesign Update
City Light BINMIC Substation
High Point Master Plan
Belltown Cottages Site Plan

Convened: 8:30am

Adjourned: 4:00pm

Commissioners Present

Donald Royse
Tom Bykonen
Ralph Cipriani
Jack Mackie
Cary Moon
Iain M. Robertson
David Spiker
Sharon E. Sutton
Tory Laughlin Taylor

Staff Present

John Rahaim
Layne Cubell
Brad Gassman
Sally MacGregor

15 Nov 2001 Project: Elevated Transportation Company

Phase: Briefing

Previous Review: 19 July 2001 (Briefing)

Presenter: Harold Robertson, Elevated Transportation Company
Eric Schmidt, Cascade Design CollaborativeAttendees: Lyle Bicknell, CityDesign
Kristian Kofoed, Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU)
Pete Marshall, Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks Department)
Cheryl Sizov, CityDesign

Time: 1.75 hours (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00231)

Action: The Commission thanked the team for the thorough briefing on the Elevated Transportation Company's (ETC) new monorail project and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

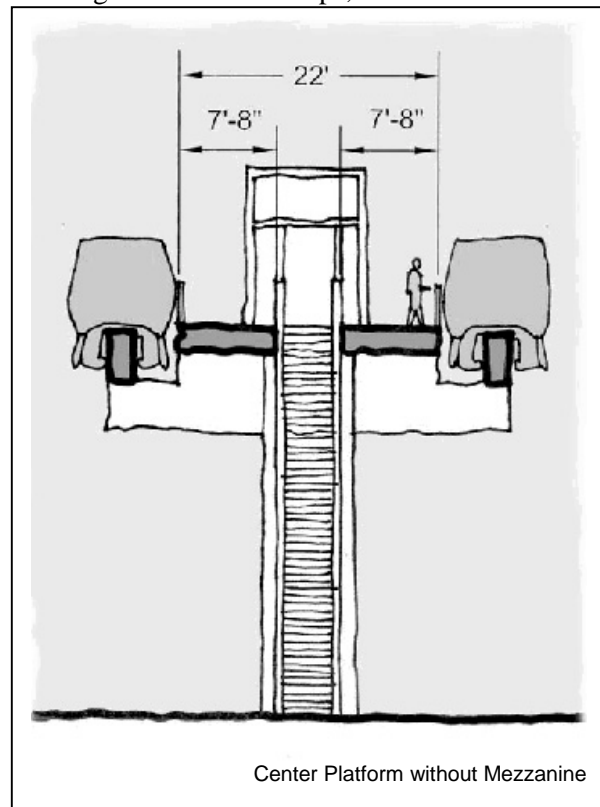
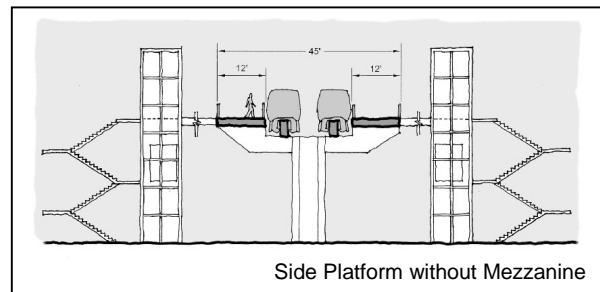
- The Commission supports the general direction of the ETC team's work;
- appreciates the team's attention to urban design issues;
- urges the team to develop detailed design guidelines to monitor and evaluate the success of the design of the overall system as it develops and hopes that these detailed design guidelines will address:
 - the architectural character of the system, whether it is perceived as light or heavy,
 - whether the system strictly responds to contextual architectural character or becomes an artful contrast, and
 - whether or not the full system will be visually continuous or individually expressive, relating to the neighborhood context;
- encourages the team to develop visual and virtual representations and explorations of these design guidelines, to better explain how the monorail trains, stations, and guideway structure will impact the urban environment and diverse context;
- looks forward to future explanations at a finer grade of detail, especially the residential use and commercial/ industrial use projections as the team further refines the specific system routes;
- urges the ETC team to present details regarding the implementation and construction phasing of this project;
- urges the ETC design team to commit to continued consultations and joint workshops with the Seattle Design Commission and the Seattle Planning Commission before solidifying concept designs for a public vote next fall to secure additional funding;
- requests that the details of the vote include funding for ongoing design review of this project; and
- would like to reiterate the actions of the previous Commission meeting on 19 July 2001.

The Elevated Transportation Company (ETC) presented the development of the monorail planning, which included further exploration of preferred alignments (the Phase I corridor connects West Seattle,

downtown, and Ballard), different monorail technology, and design principles for the stations. The design team has conducted workshops with many communities, and has worked with many City departments to obtain a considerable amount of input and clarification on the implications of the project.

The ETC team continues to identify the requirements for the route and continues to develop the station area plans. The preferred alignment must connect Seattle neighborhoods to downtown Seattle. The route recommendations are based on transit need, and will serve areas where the bus service does not meet the transit demand; the preferred route would also provide access to activity areas that have been identified in neighborhood plans. The urban design team organized field studies and route delineations into five sections: Ballard, Interbay/Westlake, downtown Seattle, SODO, and West Seattle through the use of neighborhood boundaries and geographic features. The ETC continues to refine the route, based on demographic information and distribution of jobs. The ETC team also continues to analyze and map the terrain. The ETC team has also developed negative and positive screening criteria to determine the route; the screening criteria is based on urban design concerns, such as a view blockage, neighborhood scale, or right-of way width, for example.

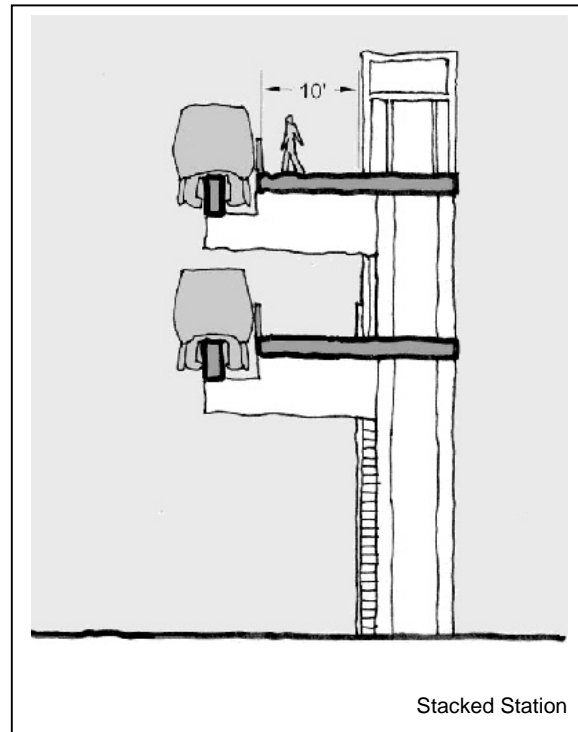
- Working with the community on the alignments within the Ballard section, the ETC eliminated some stations. Currently, engineers are examining the alignment in this section to identify appropriate turning radii and monorail speed.
- The ETC has identified a preferred alternative route through Interbay; the Magnolia/ Queen Anne community prefers a Fifteenth Avenue West route. Through further workshops, the ETC also identified an alternative route, down Dexter Avenue West, west of Lake Union, in order to support future employees in this area.
- Within the Downtown Seattle section, there are two preferred routes, along Second Avenue and Fourth Avenue. The Second Avenue route would connect to Fifteen Avenue West (in Queen Anne), while the Fourth Avenue route would connect west of Lake Union. The team has also identified the opportunity for a Fifth Avenue route; this route would provide connections to EMP and the stadia (stations at these venues would be closed during morning peak rush hours).
- In SODO, the ETC identified the E-3 Busway and Third Avenue as alternatives to First and Fourth Avenues South. These routes would offer the same opportunities as Fourth Avenue, with fewer concerns.
- The preferred route alternatives in West Seattle have become a three-pronged alternative. All of these extensions may not be completed in the



first phase of the monorail project, but the route must provide a link to Admiral Way. The route in this area has been addressed and changed due to density, slope, and the location of single family neighborhoods.

Using screening criteria to identify a preferred technology alternative, the team has examined the “traditional” medium/ large system monorail technology. The ETC team has been researching the dimensions of the guideway and beam system, cost per passenger mile, car capacity and sizes, among other concerns. They have also investigated potential bridge designs to connect to Ballard; the team presented examples of a concrete arch, a concrete box girder, and a cable-stayed bridge.

The ETC team has developed design guidelines and a vision for the monorail. They would like to use overlay zoning that has been put in place for Sound Transit. The corridor should have a positive effect on the urban streetscape; the alignment should take advantage of the topography and minimize view obstruction. The team recognized the need to conform to specific neighborhood plans and visions, while addressing safety concerns. Mezzanine and at-grade stations may be integrated into the existing streetscape. Tracks may impact the views to and from buildings; the design team continues to study the shadow impacts of guideway beams at different times of the year, to determine how the track will impact the street. Wayfinding will also be addressed in the development of the monorail design and station designs.



Land may be purchased, such as parking lots at the back of buildings, to provide space for vertical circulation; the design team feels that this access should not be within the sidewalk right-of-way. Because this may be expensive, the team also developed design guidelines to place this circulation within the buildings. Side by side platforms within mezzanine stations would provide more flexibility, improve difficult connections to buildings, and would be more efficient. A center platform design would be the most efficient alternative. Stacked stations have also been identified as an option.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Recognizing that many cars would have doors on either side, would like to know if fences would be required at stations, opposite the side of the car addressing the platform. Hopes that the team recognizes that this changes the profile of the track and station.
- Would like to know if the design includes a provision for emergency pedestrian egress path along the beam, between stations. Believes that the presented profiles of a clean, simple beam are deceptive.
 - Proponents stated that the design team has been working with the Seattle Fire Department, and this egress may be a metal grate attached to the guideway; the walkway may not be required at all locations. These concerns have not completely been resolved, and the team has not determined the height of the walkway.

- Recognizes that the guideway, as a system could be light or heavy and permanent. Each approach has pros and cons. Believes that the Commission should discuss these alternatives.
- Believes the monorail stations could either blend in or contrast with the surrounding streetscape. Each approach also has pros and cons. Feels that too many systems attempt to blend in. Believes that the monorail system should be visually contrasting.
- Questions whether or not the guideway design should promote a sense of continuity or reflect the neighborhood and allow individual expression. Believes that visual continuity is comforting, as seen in examples like the Paris, France Metro. Would like to know if others agree that the monorail should be a visual citywide statement.
- Believes that the design guidelines the ETC presented are actually performance guidelines, and address concerns about efficiency and service, rather than the design of the streetscape. Urges the team to develop design guidelines that address the approach the ETC would like to take in terms of visual continuity, lightness and heaviness, and visually contrasting station design.
- Recognizes that the chosen route would have significant impacts on the areas they address. Believes that South Lake Union is the future downtown Seattle, in terms of upcoming development, and that this should be the location of the chosen route. Does not believe that Fifteenth Avenue West will experience comparable development. Believes that the link between Westlake and downtown needs to be developed.
 - Proponents stated that this is why the team continues to work on area-wide plans. There could be additional routes or extensions in a Phase II development of the monorail. A Phase II could also continue along the Aurora Avenue to the zoo. Further stated that the ETC team is working to determine in which phase each segment would be built.
- Believes that others, with technical expertise, are examining the nature of the alignment. Would like to examine the project at a finer grain of detail, and examine links within residential development.
- Believes that alignment is not simply a concern of catchment and ridership. Believes that the decision to bring the route on Second Avenue or Fourth Avenue is a significant urban design issue.
- Does not believe that urban design concerns will be a major force in choosing a specific route. Believes the route will be chosen based on technological, catchment, and geographical concerns. Would like to provide valuable input on design after the route has been selected.
 - Proponents stated that this may not be the case in downtown, recognizing that the choice between Second and Fourth Avenues, as the ridership will be close. Urban design will be a primary concern as the team evaluates these two corridors. The team is trying to provide connections to the bus tunnel. Urban design concerns will also affect the alignment, whether the monorail is on the east or west side of the street.
- Would like to know if the ETC team has considered integrated, structured, consistent design review, similar to the Light Rail Review Panel (LRRP), which includes the Planning Commission, Design Commission, and Arts Commission. This would be a financial commitment.
 - Proponents stated that they have spoken with Design and Planning Commission staff, and the ETC team is open to the idea of integrated review, which would be the most efficient process. The team needs to determine the extent of the design before the project is submitted for a vote. A City staff member is coordinating the involvement of

other City departments. While Initiative 53 mandated this investigation, which is funded by City funds, the City has not addressed the need to compensate City staff for the internal staff operations related to this project.

- Believes that design review should be a component of the financial package presented to voters, or the design review will not take place. Believes that 22 stations would have a significant impact on the urban design of the corridor, and meetings would be needed at least once a month, minimum. Feels that design review should play an important role in the process, pre-vote.
 - Proponents stated that the Draft EIS would be published the first week of April. The ETC team will meet with the community for input through the first and second weeks of February.
- Would like to know if the team has identified a preference between Second and Fourth Avenues.
 - Proponents stated that there is not a clear preferred alternative between the two, and the urban design staff of the ETC team is split.
- Examining future development opportunities, believes that there is a clear difference between Second and Fourth Avenues, as Fourth Avenue could serve First Hill, but the waterfront will always block future development west.
- Encourages the team to recognize that a Fourth Avenue route would slice through the heart of the Civic Center, visually. Believes that it would be necessary to examine and compare land uses along the two streets.
- Does not believe that it is possible to examine the urban design implications, based on what the design team has presented. Encourages the team to develop simulations or visual representations of the stations and their impact on the context.
- Recognizes that the alignment and urban design are both critical, but that urban design is not simply a designation of column location. Urges the ETC team to think critically about the development patterns of the future. If this project can augment or modify that development in one direction or another, the project will have a significant impact.
- Believes that the Commission cannot provide sufficient recommendations at this stage, but would like additional time, and a workshop, perhaps, to better understand all of the concerns.
 - Proponents stated that they need feedback on the general direction the project is taking.
- Urges the team to develop proactive, inspiring design guidelines, so that the Commission can better determine whether or not the monorail design meets the design goals.
- Encourages the team to present realistic examples of the monorail showing them within the context of the city, rather than sweeping, sleek monorail images that are irrelevant to what will happen in Seattle.
- Believes that there are three levels of conversation, addressing the planning of the system and how it will impact the city, the impact on the human experience with the monorail in the city, and the implementation and development process of the system.
 - Proponents stated that the draft financing plan for would be available for the ETC Board by January. Further stated that the other two concerns are issues that the Design Commission should address.
- Would like to know about the phasing of construction, conceptually. Would like to know if the columns would be started everywhere, at once.
 - Proponents stated that they could discuss these physical and planning concerns at the next meeting.

- Encourages the design team to examine alternatives through Photoshop®, to show the guideway corridor, stations, and bridges in the streetscape. Urges the design team to develop a monorail system-wide design philosophy.
- Believes that the station design for each station should be as graceful as possible. Believes that neighborhood, site-specific stations would be distracting to the system design.
- Recognizes that typical representations of monorail systems depict Jetsons-type images, without any context or station. Urges the team to develop a visual example of how the system would work, so it is not simply considered a glorified toy.
- Believes that the current conception of the monorail is that it is a toy. This proposal represents significant infrastructure and the system will shape the future of the city; feels that the team needs to show how this system will affect the image of the city.

15 Nov 2001 Project: **CityDesign Update**

Phase: Briefing

Presenter: John Rahaim

Time: 1 hour

(SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00209)

John Rahaim, the CityDesign Director, presented an update of current CityDesign activities and projects.

- **Budget-** Follow up work for the Open Space Strategy, a long-term vision for the open space system and a ten-year implementation strategy for a portion of the system, will require additional funding. Matching Funds have been cut as a result of 2002 budget reductions, and other funds or grants may be required to fill this gap. The document is not yet complete. There are many exciting ideas in this strategy, but the visual presentation of these ideas will be further developed. A non-City agency could help to guide the implementation of this strategy, and further promote these ideas.
- **Urban Design Resource Center-** CityDesign is pursuing improvement of current education and outreach activities. Further implementation of the resource center would require non-City funding, but most philanthropic institutions do not donate to public agencies. This project would require additional follow-up.
- **Design Review Board-** Currently, CityDesign staff are spending significant time to evaluate the current program. There may be short-term and long-term changes to the system. Some of the current improvements will be 2002 work plan items, and some of these items may require code changes.

The Design Review Board (DRB) has reviewed over 600 projects since its inception in 1994. Eighty percent of the value of the projects reviewed by the Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU) went through design review. Staffing for the Design Review Board is a concern, as the small staff must provide support to eight Boards. The Design Review Program a key part of DCLU's public services but often does not get the recognition as such. Planners play a role at the DRB meetings, but do not provide administration services to the Boards. Every board functions differently, and because this is only one facet of their work, planners are not trained to facilitate meetings.

- **The Light Rail Review Panel (LRRP)** staff completed an assessment of lessons learned, and identified the next steps for this project. LRRP hopes to discuss the review process with Mayor Paul Schell, to determine whether or not LRRP should continue.
- **Viaduct-** The urban design consultants working on this project are integrally involved and contributing innovative ideas.
- **South Lake Union Workshop-** Seattle Design Commission and Seattle Planning Commission co-sponsored the workshop session, with support from Vulcan. Different work groups focused on certain areas within South Lake Union (SLU). Next steps include development of character sketches of the concepts suggested at the workshop. The Strategic Planning Office (SPO) will distribute a report of the workshop at a public meeting on December 7.
- **Mayor Letter-** The Seattle Design Commission (SDC) and the Seattle Planning Commission (SPC) would like to each distribute a letter to the incoming Mayor and staff, to explain some of the major issues the city will be facing. Some of the primary concerns address transportation, and SDC and SPC hope that these will not be considered solely *transportation* projects, as these projects will greatly impact the character and the public realm of the city. CityDesign needs to broaden the

category of transportation improvements, recognizing that funding for these projects can address existing concerns. Transportation projects do not typically solely meet functional requirements.

Sound Transit is currently paying for seventeen City staff positions; similar positions should be funded for the Elevated Transportation Company (ETC) and Viaduct.

Housing is a primary concern for the city, and a previous administration initiated the Seattle Housing Office. The City needs to address the development of new housing projects, and how these projects relate to each other and shape the city.

- Developer Forum- CityDesign has established a positive relationship with the development community. These workshops should continue with the new mayor.
- Open Space Strategy- Mithun, the consultant for the Open Space Strategy, presented a draft report of the Open Space Strategy on October 25, to obtain feedback on work completed to date. This draft report includes a long-term vision for the open space system and a ten-year implementation strategy for a portion of the system.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Believes that it is critical for CityDesign to coordinate activity and the direction of development, rather than leading activity as its primary role.
 - The Director of CityDesign stated that this proactive role would be similar to the work on the open space strategy, but taking the planning to the next level of detail, looking at the public realm.
- Recognizes that there are many expensive infrastructure projects under development, and no one is examining how these projects and transportation projects are shaping the city.
- Is concerned that some of CityDesign's work would not be understood by the public, beyond the design community. Believes that these ideas are abstract and remote. Is concerned that the design community would consider CityDesign's proposals viable, but the general public would not readily understand the importance.
 - The Director of CityDesign stated that the waterfront would be a good example of this discussion. Currently, an urban design team is working with the Viaduct team, but their work continues to explore how a transportation project fits into the surrounding city. However, there is no waterfront plan, and this transportation plan for the Viaduct will become the de facto plan for the waterfront. A transportation project should not define the city's plan for the waterfront.
- Recognizes that there are so many lost opportunities in the public realm. Neighborhood plans were in place for Pioneer Square, the International District, and SODO. All new development in these areas followed these neighborhood plans, but these new projects do not address the public realm, including access, pedestrian movement, and sidewalk widths. Believes that there are too many lost opportunities, and the City needs to take leadership in coordinating these needed changes.
 - The Director of CityDesign stated that the development of the stadia is an example of missed opportunities. There was extensive planning for these projects, but there was no planning to determine how these projects would affect the public realm.
- Believes that the City does need to play an active role, to address the public realm; the design and implementation of these improvements are sorely needed.

- The Director of CityDesign stated that the City should be up-front, take a visioning approach, and show the economic benefits of this role.
- Believes that the City has an opportunity to shape the city in a way that hasn't happened in 100 years. Other agencies need to help the City develop this vision.
- Believes that CityDesign needs to show how this process is efficient and cost effective.

15 Nov 2001 Commission Business

ACTION ITEMS

- A. TIMESHEETS
- B. MINUTES FROM 18 OCTOBER 2001- APPROVED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- C. OUTSIDE COMMITMENT UPDATES
- D. DC WORK PLAN 2002 FOLLOW UP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- E. VIADUCT PUBLIC MEETINGS
11-15 LAFAYETTE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAFETERIA
5:00- 8:00 PM
2645 CALIFORNIA AVENUE SW
- F. CITYDESIGN OPEN HOUSE, DEC. 13TH, 5:00-7:00 PM
- G. SLU OPEN HOUSE/ SPO, DEC. 5TH, 3:30 PM
- H. COMMENDATION LETTERS- THE COMMISSION WOULD LIKE TO PRESENT COMMENDATION LETTERS DURING A YEAR-END COMMISSION CELEBRATION. THE COMMISSION DISCUSSED PROJECT AWARD CRITERIA, AND CLARIFIED THE NEED TO RECOGNIZE PROJECTS THAT REPRESENTED TRUE INNOVATION AND WOULD GREATLY IMPROVE AND STRENGTHEN THE PUBLIC REALM. THE COMMISSION REFINED A LIST OF POTENTIAL RECIPIENTS FOR A SIMPLE AWARD CEREMONY PLANNED FOR DECEMBER 20TH.

15 Nov 2001 Project: **City Light- BINMIC Substation**

Phase: Briefing

Previous Reviews: 19 November 1998, 24 February 1999 (SeaTran Workshop), 5 April 2001 (Briefing)

Presenters: Mathew Lawson, Seattle City Light
Angela Mendolia, Seattle City Light

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00220)

Action: The Commission appreciates the briefing on this essential, new infrastructure project and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Commission hopes that the design focus and public art investment are placed on the highly visible transmission lines, rather than the site of the substation, which is more hidden, but noted that the design of the structure is also important;
- supports design collaboration with an artist, perhaps recognizing the previous work of Nancy Hammer on *The Highline* transmission lines in the mid-1980's is intriguing;
- urges the team to work with both Seattle Center and the Seattle Arts Commission to address the design of the eighty-foot tall transmission pole at Seattle Center, as this will be a major, highly visible structure;
- encourages City Light to reconsider complete enclosure of the substation, recognizing that the substation does not need to become a fortress;
- urges City Light to allocate funds in the budget to work with a landscape architect and artist;
- hopes that the Design-Build Request for Proposals (RFP) incorporates strong language to reflect general design principles relative to this project; and
- offers the support of several Commissioners to work with City Light on crafting these principles and reviewing the RFP.

The Interbay substation will be located in the Ballard Interbay Northend Manufacturing and Industrial Center (BINMIC) at 3240 17th Avenue West. This substation will meet the growing demand of new development in the area. Zoned for industrial use, the relatively flat site will provide space for three transformers.

Design is not yet complete, and the project will not proceed until funding has been procured. Funding for in-house design would be different than funding for a design-build project. City Light will develop this project as a design-build project or a turnkey project. City Light would like the substation to be an enclosed compact, gas-insulated system, in order to address security concerns; this type of equipment is also smaller.

There will be a bicycle path north of the substation, along the Burlington Northern railway easements. The transmission route would not follow the bike path until the northern portion at the ship canal; the transmission lines would follow City streets, along the right-of-way.

A new substation has not been built since 1984. While this new station will serve current demands, City Light has also examined the implications of future needs. City Light has been working to forecast the future requirements of this station. The intent is to create a reproducible design from this project.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Recognizes that underground transmission lines are expensive. Believes that transmission lines can be beautiful works of art. Does not believe that the site will be highly visible to the public, even though it is adjacent to QFC. Hopes that the design attention focuses on the transmission lines, rather than the site of the substation itself.
- Agrees that the visibility of the transmission lines themselves would be more significant.
 - Proponents stated that they have spoken with the Seattle Arts Commission, and City Light hopes to work with an artist for this project. Further stated that an artist helped to design transmission lines for a previous project; this design was successful, and City Light hopes that these transmission lines would be similar in nature. Further stated that the transmission lines would cross the ship canal, and span the Burke-Gilman Trail; the Fremont community hopes to obtain the dinosaurs from the Pacific Science Center. City Light identified this as an opportunity to work with the community, and install dinosaurs at this location. There will be large transmission poles in the Seattle Center parking area; this is another opportunity to develop a visibly interesting structure.
- Is concerned that City Light, responding to current security issues, will create a fortress of this substation. Would like to remind City Light that the Viewland-Hoffman and Creston-Nelson substations were built when substations were being bombed; at that time, new substations were not enclosed.
- Recognizes that the Engineering/ Procurement/ Construct (EPC) process is different. Would like to know whether or not the design ideas would be discarded, once the contract has been awarded. Hopes that the Request for Proposals (RFP) contains strong language regarding design principles. Would like to know if City Light has solutions to encourage innovation in design.
 - Proponents recognized that the Design Commission has worked with other departments for similar projects, such as a water treatment facility at Cedar Falls. Through the RFP for a design-build process, City Light will work with three to five consultants, and the consultant selection would be based on a preliminary design. Further stated that there would be three to four opportunities for design review.
- Recognizes that this will be a gas-insulated substation, which decreases the required footprint. Commends City Light for this decision. Would like to know if this is more expensive.
 - Proponents stated that this is more expensive, but City Light is bound by the 35,000 square foot site.
- Believes that if the project is design-build, the design principles need to be more explicit than “the project needs to exhibit civic pride.” Believes that the RFP must clearly define the character of the towers and structure, as these requirements are typically outside the purview of the design-build contractor.
- Agrees that the RFP should list the specific issues that must be addressed.
 - Proponents agreed, and stated that City Light would decide the screening criteria of the

proposals, and the requirement of these design principles would clearly be delineated. Further stated that funds could be designated for the purpose of the artistic design of the station. Further stated that a Commissioner could participate in the consultant selection process. If the project were designed in-house, there would be more control and review of the design. Further stated that the building and substation equipment would be integrated. City Light is working with large equipment manufacturers, and eight to nine million dollars of the twelve million dollar construction budget is just for specialized equipment.

- Hopes that the RFP could require a landscape architect and an artist to be involved in the design of the project.
 - Proponents stated that a portion of the budget could be designated for this use.
- Believes that City Light must take the lead on the wording of the proposal.
- Suggests that, after City Light has received proposals from design-build firms, in response to the RFP, Commissioners could comment on the proposals. Encourages City Light to examine the design guidelines for the East Pine substation.
- Believes that the design of the transmission poles should reflect their context. For example, a pole at the Seattle Center site could be more innovative and intriguing. Believes that efforts and expenditures should be focused on the various transmission line sites.

15 Nov 2001 Project: High Point Master Plan

Phase: Initial Briefing

Presenters: Tom Phillips, Seattle Housing Authority
Brian Sullivan, Mithun, Architects and PlannersAttendees: Tammy Frederick, Seattle Transportation (SeaTran)
Kathy Gwilym, SvR Design Company
Bill Kreager, Mithun, Architects and Planners
Vince Lyons, Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU)
Pete Marshall, Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks Department)
Carol Proud, DCLU
Marilyn Senour, SeaTran
Peg Staeheli, SvR Design Company

Time: 1.5 hours (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00253)

Action: The Commission appreciates the presentation of the overall project and its comprehensive approach to social, demographic, and community design goals. The Commission would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Commission commends the intention of the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) to create a mixed income neighborhood in the truest sense;
- appreciates the stated urban design intention of repairing the perceived tear in the West Seattle planning fabric;
- recommends that the team consider planning models that go beyond purely contextual paradigms, particularly along the east edge of the site;
- recommends a planning concept that develops a clear hierarchy of public and private spatial zones;
- recommends that, if possible, each residential unit has its own private outdoor space or direct access to outdoor space “owned” by the unit;
- encourages the team to develop a series of focused and systematic design guidelines to coordinate and direct all future development;
- urges the team to conduct a careful analysis of the topographic condition of the site to be used as a project form-giver, recognizing the impact of the stormwater;
- urges the team to develop management strategies to ensure the implementation and success of the social aspects of the project and its long-term viability as a coherent neighborhood;
- recommends design consideration for transportation systems other than the private car; and
- encourages the team to study the innovative SEA Streets project to ascertain its possible relevance to High Point.

High Point, in West Seattle on 35th Avenue Southwest, is the third major Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) redevelopment project in Seattle. SHA hopes to complete this project efficiently, recognizing lessons learned from previous developments. SHA will work with the community early and often, to recognize the main concerns early in the process, and to notify residents of the nature of the

development. SHA hopes to identify a new name for this redevelopment project.

This will be a mixed-income community, while the number of low-income units will be increased; the number of homes at the High Point site will be increased by three hundred. Some of the original 1300 units were removed to provide space for a park and a school. An additional 250 low-income units will be developed off-site, in conjunction with this project. The architecture of the development will also be physically diverse. In addition to housing units, the development will contain management facilities, a senior center, additional community facilities, a neighborhood clinic, and the expansion of an existing community center. The site could also include a grocery store, with housing, along 35th Avenue Southwest, near a clinic.

To improve the physical design of High Point, and improve the relationship between this site and the West Seattle context, the team intends to stitch the street grid fabric into the surrounding grid. SHA will propose a rezone of the site, and the zoning map for Rainier Vista will serve as a model. This would improve the nature and distribution of the mixed income units. 35th Avenue Southwest links the site to the north and south, while Sylvan and Morgan Streets provide connections down the steep wooded slope to the east. The existing streets are thirty-two feet wide. Some of the streets throughout the surrounding neighborhood are twenty-five feet wide, and residents of New Holly, another SHA redevelopment, feel that the twenty-five feet wide streets are safer. The existing buildings are placed throughout the open site with irregularity. There are many existing trees throughout the open site; the project team has documented the site with an arborist, to determine which trees should be removed. The northern edge of the site is very steep; the community park to the north recognizes the views to the city. The grade throughout the site is terraced.

In addition to site and history analysis, the project team has worked with the community to identify ways by which the project can be integrated into the West Seattle context. Currently, the physical design clearly identifies that this project is different, or that it is low-income. The community also identified traffic, neighborhood amenities, and the character of open space and public facilities as additional important considerations. The High Point redevelopment should connect to and take advantage of the existing West Seattle amenities. The master plan will ensure that 35th Avenue Southwest continues through the site as a primary north-south arterial. The project team has studied the architectural context, scale, and character to better identify the needs of the redevelopment.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Commends the team for their efforts. Appreciates the magnitude and opportunity for this community redevelopment. Would like to emphasize the critical need to develop private front and back yards, including yards for rental units. Encourages the team to use the site planning as an opportunity to create private outdoor space for each unit.
 - Proponents recognized that, in the redevelopment of New Holly, there are yards. This has made a visible difference in the community and use of or participation within the open space. Further stated that the existing site topography provides many opportunities.
- Encourages the design team to develop a systematic process or rules by which the site is laid out. There are many interesting constraints created by the slopes and terraced topography. Believes that the rules could be used to develop a hierarchy of spaces and wayfinding improvements, and that these rules could be used throughout the site. Hopes that there is no leftover space at the site.
 - Proponents stated that the site development is developed through an intent to improve livability.

- Recognizes that the east edge of the site, due to the topography, would not be integrated into the neighborhood. Urges the team to recognize that low density is not required on the east side of the site.
- Would like to know how the project team intends to address the terraced site. Would like to know if there would be extensive cut and fill.
 - Proponents stated that a significant part of the site is flat. Additionally, the terraced portions of the site contain flat areas above other flat areas; therefore, these relationships can be used to improve accessibility to units.
- Would like to know the extent of the lessons learned through previous redevelopment projects. Would like the project team to talk about relocation concerns that have been raised in other projects, and would like to know how relocation of current residents would be addressed.
 - Proponents recognized the relocation difficulties that have been experienced at other sites. Rainier Vista, for example, would be phased, and there would also be a lottery to determine relocation priorities. Agreed that this is a difficult process, and some Rainier Vista residents would be moving to New Holly. Further stated that there would be some flexibility, but the priority would be having available units.
- Recognized the team's goal to knit the development into the community. Urges the team to set the stage for future development in this area, and how this redevelopment would affect the future of West Seattle.
 - Proponents stated that the team is working with Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU) throughout the planning process to ensure that the project is responsive to the neighborhood plans and the needs throughout the next twenty years. Further recognized that this is an opportunity to introduce mixed-use development in the community. This should be a community facility that would meet the greater community's needs throughout the future.
- Would like to know if the shape of the existing streets within High Point would remain. Believes that the current configuration of streets is amorphous, and blurs the relationships between public and private space. Is concerned that the open spaces are undefined and ambiguous.
- Believes that the curving "suburban" streets do control speed, and straight grid promotes speeding cars. Is concerned that straightening the curved streets is in response to the notion that curved streets are a stigma of public housing. Would like to know if it is necessary to abandon the gentle pedestrian passage of the curved streets. Believes that the building locations and placement should be used to integrate High Point into the community.
 - Proponents stated that, due to the curved nature of the streets, wayfinding is also very difficult. Further stated that schemes with both alternatives would be completed to meet the SEPA requirements. The team would be able to compare a scheme incorporating curved streets and rectilinear streets.
- Is convinced that the building orientation could clarify the spatial arrangement.
- Recognizes that many of the concerns at the site could be addressed by curved or rectilinear streets, but prefers the rectilinear arrangement, as this improves wayfinding.
- At a future presentation, would like the team to explain how the circulation would fit the existing

topography. Would like the team to present a further analysis of the land.

- Proponents stated that these concerns had been addressed, but the team wanted to introduce the full Commission to the project, recognizing that some of the Commissioners have already reviewed the project.
- Believes that basic street grids are efficient, and can be used to develop a hierarchy of land and spaces. Believes that the street grid improves traffic flow. Believes that traffic control is also addressed by the width of the street. Recognizes the open nature of the site, and does not relate to the context. Believes that the topographical considerations should be central to the development of the master plan.
- Would like the team to explain the scope of the master plan, and how this master plan is implemented, architecturally. Would like to know if different architects would be used to implement the master plan.
 - Proponents stated that Mithun would be completing the High Point Master Plan and the architectural design of the rental units only. Further stated that the master plan would identify different prototypes for the units, and the consultant is working with developers and builders to develop a master plan that would address the market appropriately. The master plan would be completed with these prototypes in mind. The planning consultant would also develop design guidelines specified for the site. Further stated that there would be different responses relative to context and other conditions of the residents (whether they are senior residents or families with children).
- As the project develops, would like the team to further explain the hierarchy of spaces and units.
- Recognizes that the presentation addresses physical needs and concerns. Hopes that the team recognizes that this project is a catalyst, which will change and evolve over time. Encourages the team to speculate about the possible features of this site in the future, and determine what needs to be put in place to ensure that these features are accommodated in the future.
 - Proponents recognized that this would be a dynamic community, and the master plan would recognize the needs for multi-generational residents.
- Recognizes that one of the best aspects of community building is the access to public areas and other communities of Seattle. Believes that there is typically a bias, when examining low-income housing, that easy access to public transportation should be provided. Recognizes that public transportation is not as extensive as it should be, to provide access to health care and education services. Encourages SHA to recognize opportunities to work with other departments in the city, public and private. Encourages SHA to examine the opportunities for car sharing programs; believes that this would be essential to strengthen the community. Believes that the scale of this project is sufficient for this type of car-sharing program.
- Recognizes that the team has worked with an arborist to examine the trees. Believes that the land is much more significant. Does not believe that the master plan should go to extensive lengths to save the trees, if the grading is sacrificed for this effort. Believes that appropriate grading is more important than saving trees. Believes that the shape of the land is an important form-giver.

15 Nov 2001 Project: Belltown Cottages Site Plan

Phase: NMF Briefing

Previous Review: 9 September 1999 (Scope Briefing)

Presenters: Peggy Gaynor, Gaynor, Inc.

Andy Sheffer, Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks Department)

Time: .5 hour

(SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00258)

Action: The Commission appreciates the opportunity to review the site plan for this exciting project. The Commission would like to make the following comments and recommendations as the team develops the design.

- The Commission is intrigued by the nature of imagination and humor in the concept of the design;
- encourages the team to further develop the layering of several concepts- the historical delineation of the cottages that are no longer on the site, the 21st Century site design, and the creation of active social spaces;
- encourages the design team to develop, with great sensitivity, the different spatial elements and areas of the site, and would like to see detailed drawings explaining these spaces and their relationship to one another;
- encourages the team to carefully consider the creation of the alley as the “front door” to the site, and hopes that the design of this edge and improvements of the alley reflect the use of this entry;
- encourages the design team to integrate the architectural design for reuse of the buildings with the site planning, to ensure that the site planning provides privacy and safety for potential residents of the cottages; and
- encourages careful and limited selection of trees and landscape, in consideration of the scale of this project.

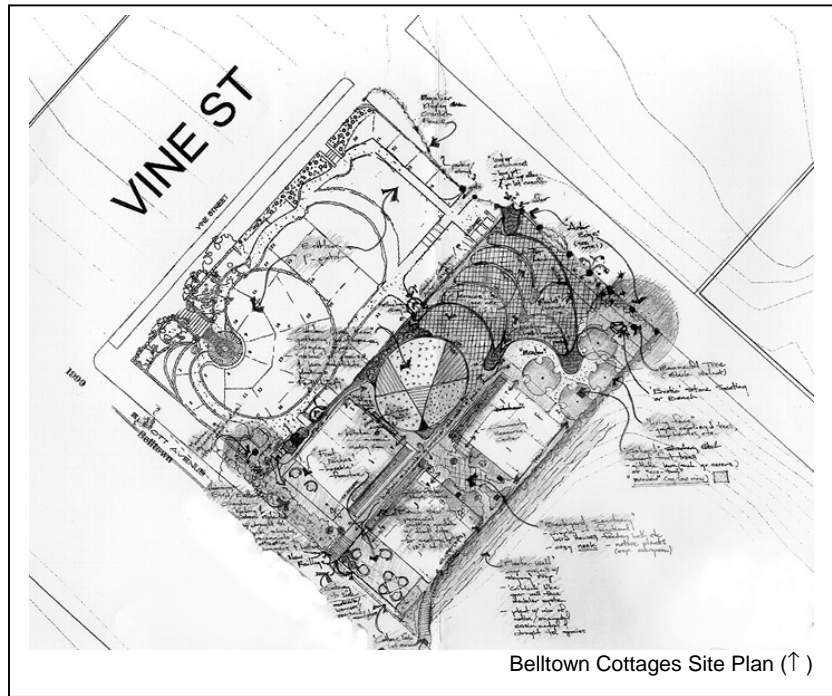
The Belltown Cottage Property is adjacent to the Belltown P-Patch at Elliott Avenue and Vine Street. There are three existing wood-frame cottages, which were built in 1916. Friends of Belltown P-Patch and community members have been working with City staff to obtain a Neighborhood Matching Fund award to purchase the property and restore the cottages and improve the adjacent open space; ownership is currently being transferred from the Fleets and Facilities Department to the Parks Department. Architectural design renovation and site design renovation is currently underway, and will continue to be reviewed by the Landmarks Board and the Parks Board. The design team is working to coordinate with other design teams working on the Growing Vine Street, *Cistern Steps*.

The ‘Friends of Belltown P-Patch’ is the client for the site design and planning. The design team worked with the community to determine how the site should be used; the community would like an outdoor living space for gatherings. The plaza and terraced steps would lead to the alley; this alley entry, the main access, also provides ADA accessibility. The terraces leading into the site change in elevation by one-foot increments; the middle of the site is approximately five feet lower than the alley. The topographical changes throughout the site will be used to improve the delineation between public and private spaces. The entrance from Elliott Avenue to the cottages is a stair that this is there now, which will be rebuilt; the cottages can also be accessed from the P-Patch, along the pathways. The site design

will also incorporate some of the stormwater catchment concepts that will be constructed along Vine Street; some water from the site could be pumped to the cistern or reused throughout the site for irrigation.

There will be small intimate spaces, and an incorporation of alternative and educational spaces. There may also be representation of the missing cottages incorporated into the landscape. The design team is also working to determine the historic landscape design of the site. The edges of the site, at the alley at the P-Patch are also important design elements. The cottages may house a caretaker, community services, or an artist-in-residence. Residents at the site will increase the activity,

hopefully increasing the safety. The Parks Department and Historic Seattle are developing the operational agreement for this site. Fundraising for site improvements is underway, as current funds will be used for the renovation of the cottages.



Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like the design team to further explain the social spaces throughout the site. Would like to know where community meetings could gather. Would like to know how people will know to enter at the alley, as this is not a typical location for an entry.
 - Proponents stated that the entrances would be well marked. The design team hopes to collaborate with the original artists of the P-Patch to develop a fanciful arcade along the edge, in addition to the water feature, drawing people into the Cottages Park. Further stated that the *Cistern Steps* would create a space, and the alley would be the front of the space, rather than Elliott Avenue.
- Believes that the site plan design is very complicated. Would like to know if the delineation of the missing cottages would be layered upon the existing, curvilinear design, or if they would replace the patterns represented in the schematic design drawing. Is not sure that these two concepts could both be incorporated successfully.
 - Proponents stated that they are still unsure about the location of the previous cottages, and the design team plans to research the location of the cottages. Recycled granite could be used to delineate the cottages.
- Appreciates the palimpsest notion to recognize the previous cottages. Believes that this layer, working with the modern curvilinear shapes, and incorporation of social spaces will be exciting. Recognizing that the alley is currently gravel, would like to know who will take responsibility for the improvements of the alley, especially as this will be the 'front door' for the cottages.
 - Proponents stated that the alley would become a mosaic of materials, such as

cobblestone, asphalt, or brick.

- Believes that the ideas behind the design and notions of activity for the site are very rich and playful, but does not yet understand the concept behind the design. At a future presentation, would like to see a clearer representation of physical manifestation of these ideas, to better understand the nature of the social spaces. Would like to see additional details, sections, and elevations.
 - Proponents stated that details have been developed, but so far, the design has been fairly simple, due to budget requirements. With additional funding, the design process can move forward.
- Would like to know if there would be funding from the Parks Department.
 - Proponents stated that the only Parks Department funds for this project would be used for the environmental soil abatement work. This soil would be graded away from the structures, and foundation drains would be installed during this process.
- Would like to know if people would be living in the cottages.
 - Proponents stated that the cottage at Elliott Avenue would be the community cottage. The cottages along the south edge of the site would be caretaker cottages, renovated as residences for a non-profit property manager. These arrangements have not been finalized.
- Hopes that the safety of the site is improved, and hopes that the safety of the occupants of the cottages is not compromised. Believes that the designation of public and private spaces should be addressed by the site design. Hopes that the disconnect between the architecture and the site planning is resolved. Recognizes that the potential artists-in-residence may not be familiar with the neighborhood, as they will be coming from other cities.
 - Proponents stated that, as the design team has recently begun to work on this project again, they are beginning to address these detailed concerns.
- Is concerned that the roots from the black walnut tree would become a concern.